



U.S. Department of Justice

CHANNING D. PHILLIPS
*Acting United States Attorney
for the District of Columbia*

*Judiciary Center
555 Fourth St., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20530*

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, September 4, 2009

For Information Contact:

Public Affairs

(202) 514-6933

http://www.usdoj.gov/usao/dc/Press_Releases/index.html

Maryland Man Charged with Armed Rape, Kidnapping, and Robbery of Five Victims He Met Through Craigslist

Washington, D.C. - Edgar D. Romero, 23, of Bladensburg, Maryland, was arraigned today on nine counts of First and Third Degree Sexual Abuse while Armed, five counts of Kidnapping while Armed, five counts of Burglary while Armed, five counts of Robbery while Armed, one count of felony Credit Card fraud, and numerous counts of Possession of a Firearm During a Crime of Violence and Threats, stemming from his attack on five women whom he met through Craigslist postings, Acting U.S. Attorney Channing D. Phillips announced. The arraignment took place before Judge Michael Rankin of the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, and is the result of a 40-count indictment returned by a Superior Court grand jury on September 1, 2009. If convicted, Romero faces a maximum sentence of life in prison without the possibility of parole. Trial has been set in the case for December 8, 2009.

According to evidence presented at two preliminary hearings in this investigation, during the period between December 12, 2008, and February 20, 2009, Romero contacted numerous women, including the five identified in the Indictment, through Craigslist advertisements for "erotic services." Romero, along with an accomplice whose identity remains unknown, met each victim at a hotel in the District, and with each victim allegedly brandished a weapon, either a knife or a firearm, and threatened to kill them if they did not cooperate fully. Romero then allegedly bound each victim with cords or duct tape, and stole whatever he could, including money, cell phones, lap tops, identification cards, and credit cards. Romero allegedly sexually assaulted two victims and aided and abetted his accomplice's sexual assault on one victim. After making final threats to find and harm each of the victims if they reported anything to the police, Romero and his accomplice would then leave.

In announcing today's arraignment and indictment, Acting U.S. Attorney Phillips praised the outstanding law enforcement efforts of a team of officers from the Metropolitan Police Department and the FBI's Violent Crimes Task Force, who worked tirelessly on these five investigations, resulting in the comprehensive indictment. From the MPD's Sexual Assault Unit he praised lead Detective Wallace Carmichael. He also noted and thanked the significant effort

made by Sexual Assault Unit Detective Ingrid Harkins and Second District Detective Keith Tabron. In addition, he recognized the assistance of MPD Detectives Kimberly Netivier and Nelson Morais, Mobile Crime Lab officers Thomas Coughlin, Kevin Jeter, Ridley Durham, and Loether Strong, Crime Scene Officers Tisha Lyons, Mary Wise, and Israel Ruiz, and fingerprint examiners Hayward Bennett, Barbara Evans, Murray Jones, and Clinton Hall. He also commended the cooperation of members of the Montgomery County Police Department, including Sergeant Errol Birch, who assisted with the search of Romero's home and car, along with his arrest. Acting U.S. Attorney Phillips praised the work of USAO Victim Witness Advocates Tracey Hawkins, Iris Vega, and Melissa Milam, Intelligence Analyst Larry Grasso, and Paralegals Joyce Arthur and Tiffany Jones. Finally, he recognized Assistant U.S. Attorney Sharon Marcus-Kurn, who investigated and is prosecuting the case.

An Indictment is merely a formal charge that a defendant has committed a violation of criminal laws and every defendant is presumed innocent until, and unless, proven guilty.

###